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NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE

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**Martin S. Portel**  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT  
BUSINESS OPERATIONS

The Honorable Spencer Abraham  
Secretary, Department of Energy  
Forrestal Building 7A-257  
1000 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Abraham:

The industry commends the Department of Energy for releasing its preliminary site suitability evaluation on Yucca Mountain—a major milestone in developing a disposal facility for used nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste from U.S. defense programs.

In the event that the Energy Department is considering additional public hearings on the PSSE beyond Nevada, the industry recommends hearings in the following regions that rely heavily on the continued availability of low-cost, clean nuclear energy:

- Illinois—the state has 12 reactors, more than any other state, that provide about half of the electricity used by business and consumers. Illinois also could be a significant transportation corridor for future shipments of used nuclear fuel should the Yucca Mountain site be developed.
- Minnesota—Xcel Energy's Prairie Island nuclear power plant could be forced to close prematurely in 2007 absent federal acceptance of used nuclear fuel from the plant. State legislation prohibits additional dry storage at Prairie Island. Consumers and businesses in Minnesota rely on nuclear energy for one-fourth of their electricity.
- Maine—The Maine Yankee nuclear power plant has closed and is pursuing decommissioning activities. Without a federal repository, used nuclear fuel at the plant must remain at the site—delaying full decommissioning.
- Georgia—Several southeastern states rely on nuclear power for their energy needs, including 27 percent of Georgia's electricity. Southern Nuclear Operating Co.'s Plant Hatch is undergoing Nuclear Regulatory Commission

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review for a 20-year license extension. Three reactors at Duke Power's Oconee plant and the Arkansas Nuclear One reactor already have received an additional 20 years on their operating license. Clearly, nuclear energy will continue to be important to the economic growth and quality of life in the southeast.

The nuclear energy industry looks forward to meaningful dialogue on the federal government's repository program at these locations. This is a national program that merits discussion in those states that rely on nuclear energy to power their economy and protect their environment.

Sincerely,



Marvin S. Fertel